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as Nitla explained, a "good trapper. He watch his trap line. Every two days he look his traps, fix his traps. He hunt too." He keeps his house well supplied with meat, wood, and grub. The ideal man shows courage without being foolhardy. "Somebody fight him, he tell him: 'Don't fight.' He save his life that way." Associated with the idea of courage is the ability to withstand discomfort. A good man must be "tough," able to travel long distances on foot, while bearing up under cold and hunger. In his ideal proportions a man shows skilfulness; he traps well; can make necessary tools, apparatus, and vehicles, and undertake a variety of repairs. Male informants did not report marital faithfulness as an ideal masculine virtue.

The primary qualifications for the ideal woman are faithfulness, thrift, industry, and skill. "You got a good woman," Nitla explained, "He can't leave you. Me, I want him. [If] I teach that girl: 'You leave him, that fellow'—that kind of woman no good. Good woman—try, try I get him—he don't want me. That number one woman. Smart woman." Not only does the concept of marital faithfulness include an absence of extramarital promiscuity, but it also denotes a wife's devotion to her husband, her care for his welfare and comfort. A woman's thrift also reflects her virtue. Thus Old Man often praised his wife for the manner in which she earned money by trapping and selling her own fur, saving the proceeds. So far as a woman's industriousness is concerned: "Good woman wash clothes, do something, cook anything. Fix the plates. Damn number one woman. That woman just the same queen. She catch fur too. She help her man. Best one." Feminine virtue includes skill. A good woman can cook well, trap effectively, lace good snowshoes, and make outstanding moccasins and clothes. A skilful industrious woman will not visit around too often but spends most of her time keeping her camp in order. Courage is not valued in a woman. Generosity, with those objects which a woman controls, and absence of aggression are further female virtues. An ideal woman may drink, but in doing so she "look after her man; wouldn't bother another man. Just talk fun."

RELIGION

Religious beliefs are of minor importance in Kaska life and the culture includes no religious ceremonials beyond the Mass and other introduced Catholic devotions. The general conception of the supernatural consists of an imposition of Christian (Catholic) attitudes on vague and disappearing elements of native belief. Both the Christian and the aboriginal elements are loosely comprehended, although an attempt has begun in the mission schools to formalize Christian beliefs in children. The general orientation of the religion tends to place all natural phenomena, including human life, in a universe controlled by supernatural agencies or "bosses." Since the techniques for soliciting this supernatural power are little stressed the individual—as well as all of nature of which he is part—would seem to enjoy a kind of fatalistic existence. This deduction is partly belied by the fact that the relative absence of supernatural supplication does not stem from attitudes of fatalism, but rather from an empirically grounded idea that in everyday things the individual's persistence and activity must also be counted on to solve problems of living.

Three main orders of the supernatural environment are distinguished by the Kaska. The first of these contains the executive agencies of natural phenomena—the "bosses" of the

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776 clouds, water, earth, and animals. Although these bosses are often referred to in anthropomorphic terms, there is evidence that the executory forces behind the natural phenomena are not always so understood. The second supernatural order is reserved for an anthropomorphically conceived Supreme Being, an aspect of religious thinking that was probably strengthened following white contact. The final order of the supernatural includes the devil.

Of the nature bosses, our data permit discussion only of the executive agency operating behind the animal world. Although there seems to be no clear idea as to whether the real animals encountered in the forest are individually capable of knowing the intentions of men, or whether it is a superior intelligence behind the fauna which has this ability and operates through the creatures, the latter reading seems best to fit the facts. This, however, is only one of several possible interpretations. A better deduction (for which there is no clear evidence) might be to regard the spiritual components of the real animals as mystically identical with the total supernatural realm in whose intelligence man and the various species participate. We will assume that it is the supernatural animal realm which possesses final intelligence and power and which, somehow manifesting itself through the forms of real animals, bestows supernatural power on men. This intelligence is also capable of frustrating the efforts of a trapper, who desires fur "too much," by keeping the animals away from that person's traps.

776 The relationship of the Supreme Being to the nature bosses was never expressed and
177 probably has never been speculated upon. From statements of informants it is possible to see this Being as superior to the lesser supernatural agencies and as a kind of final and creative authority. The Supreme Being is identified as God or Jesus. As is indicated in Nitla's statement that Jesus is "head man" and "boss of this ground," Jesus and God are sometimes thought of as one; at other times, however, Jesus is referred to as the son of God. Nitla spoke of Jesus having been killed by hostile soldiers who were instigated to their deed by a wealthy but evil king. By His death Jesus made a trail upon which the people could reach heaven. Prior to His killing, people could not achieve heaven but had to "stop this side." The Supreme Being resides in heaven and is the final judge of the actions of men.

776 The conception of the devil was not much better elaborated. In general he seems to be the boss of evil, operating through people who are hereditarily or wilfully disposed to follow his influence. The devil is also capable of controlling the actions of certain animals which he apparently created, such as the grizzly bear. By instigating the grizzly to kill men, the devil can claim the spirits of the animal's victims.

Mythologically there is a fourth realm of supernaturals, mainly cannibalistic monsters, like the giant frog, jackfish, and elephant, which formerly menaced people and are still occasionally feared, perhaps because of their association with the devil. A few people spoke of these creatures with manifest emotion and sincerity. Two persons, Old Kean and his grandson, twelve year old Jack, identified a number of the Rorschach inkblots as such mythological monsters.

778 Both people and animals (who, a long time ago, were also people) may sometimes
776 possess supernaturally derived power. The acquisition of such power by individuals is no longer of great social importance, but few individuals were willing to discuss the concept frankly. When intoxicated, however, several young men were reported to have announced

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their possession of power, tracing it to the agency of animals. As near as could be learned, power (which is sometimes called "medicine") denotes that the person is under the protection of an animal supernatural on whose assistance he can rely. Any animal or game bird can bestow such benefits on an individual, who may solicit their interest by isolating himself in the bush. Apparently, however, purposeful isolation is not essential in order to obtain supernatural help, a person sometimes receiving an indication of such attention without any effort on his part. The acquisition of power is signalled by a vision or, perhaps, a dream in which an animal manifesting human attributes speaks to the individual. Sometimes a vision is not readily forthcoming even when solicited and was in fact denied to Nitla who said: "Some people go stay in brush alone. Got medicine. I can't make it, me. I'm too young. I'm just try first time. Nothing see me . . . Something don't want me." He was not disturbed on account of this lack of success.

A different type of supernatural power, one that is more readily talked about, promotes aid and protection. This may be acquired through possession of religious symbols like crucifixes, prayer books, and rosaries. Many people carry such objects on their persons whenever they leave camp. Once Nitla said that he would request the "mission man to give cross for me and wife. Grizzly bear can't bother that one. Somebody say that way. I believe him." Lowering his voice the informant added that a crucifix would also keep a seducer away from a man's wife. It would protect both the husband and woman from sexual aggression. A few weeks later Nitla was seen wearing a rosary around his neck. Small gospels distributed by the priest are also carefully kept. Paulette Donnelly embroidered a moosehide "Bible case" to contain one of these slim volumes.

Occasionally occurrences are interpreted as resulting from a favorable disposition on the part of the supernatural environment. Thus a man may ascribe his luck in killing a moose to the fact that he has had the cooperation of the animal realm. Many more times, however, references to luck are simply offhand mentions of a fate whose character the individual is not troubled to analyze.

Two states of existence are possible for the spirit in the afterlife. For those whose lives were free from evil there is heaven and everlasting happiness; for the evil there is hell. Just as heaven is identified with God, hell is associated with the devil. This correlation of an afterlife with the morality of the spirit's earthly career is not perfect, however, since, regardless of his conduct, any person killed by a grizzly bear must go to the bear's "daddy" —the devil. Although hell is recognized as an unpleasant place, few people admitted any realistic fear of it.

The idea of praying for the welfare of the dead is known to some informants as a result of church attendance. This suggests the beginnings of belief in a third, temporary state of spiritual existence—purgatory.

Alongside the idea of spiritual immortality remains a belief in reincarnation, the rebirth of the spirit in a child who, as he grows older, recognizes the world as a place where he has already been. One or two children were mentioned who had revealed this *déjà vue* experience.

Several forms of divination are practiced more or less seriously by a few Indians. Sometimes the leaves in a tea cup are inspected in order to foretell the results of a prospective

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Like most people the Kaska Indians postulated the existence of certain normally unseen and unsensed entities, including counterparts or souls of the empirically sensed animals.[3] Other sensed events, like stones or clouds, also possessed a transcendental character such that they perhaps warrant designation of Kaska thinking as animistic. The normally unseen world included Gusli'na ("devil"), who dwelt at the last point of a long river.[4] He lived in the company of a woman, ɔ'ɣa, who became the first sheep after she had been killed by the culture hero, Tsu'guya. The attribution of horns to the devil may well represent the influence of biblical mythology. Informants denied the notion of a cold being operating as the devil's helper. Apparently the words gusli, "cold," and Gusliina are not related. The Indians were cognizant of the North Wind Man (itsiipa'otena) who brought suffering. "If I am mean he will make a big wind to make me suffer. He doesn't want an evil man to follow his track, so he covers it with snow."[5] Cannibalistic giants, like Teɣutsiia and Etceɣus'tala, inspired considerable fear. Tsitaɣitsatse, another giant, befriended men. Weaker than Etceɣustela he nevertheless killed the latter with the aid of Indians. When Tsitaɣitsatse defecated, his feces became hard as rock the moment that they struck the earth. Helpful to man and powerful in his behalf were the dwarfs, who, however, were constantly menaced by animals. In warfare these small beings helped to bring up wind and cold that paralyzed the enemy. In size a dwarf reached about the height of a caribou jaw. One such being could pack only about half a pound. Despite the tendency of the dwarfs to steal women, people laughed when they spoke of the antics of the little people.[6] Nobody ever secured shamanistic power from a dwarf. Informants could not recall a practice of making offerings to rocks.

Long ago monstrous animals roamed the world. Although similar beliefs are widespread in North America, in the Cassiar traditions of such animals cannot be discussed without reference to the fossil evidence of mammoths and dinosaurs encountered in the region. The following tale illustrates the kinds of narratives that perpetuated beliefs in monsters.

Once when a group of people were camping a big monster, like an elephant, came close to the camp. A shaman who had six fingers (laaloona, "many fingers") went out to meet the animal and addressed it like a person. The monster exclaimed, "I saw young game track. I was going to have a good meal,

[3] "It is believed that all animals understand human speech. For this reason natives are careful what they say about them. . . ." Jones, *Study of the Tlingits of Alaska* (1914), 164.

[4] Along the Mackenzie the Indians recognized a cognate "devil, 'Ha is-linee,' or, 'the sorcerer.'" McLean, *Notes of a Twenty-Five Years' Service in the Hudson's Bay Territory* (1932), 342.

[5] Among the Swampy Cree the oldest of four brothers was the North Wind who sent cold and punished evil doers. Skinner, *Notes on the Eastern Cree and Northern Saulteaux* (1911), 59; Speck, *Naskapi* (1935), 56-57.

[6] Among the Pelly Indians "there are the little men of the Mountain that are supposed to be about four feet high at the most and have fine living places in the heart of the mountains and are exceptionally strong and wise who come out occasionally and capture their women for wives in some cases making the father of the girl they have taken a medicineman in return for the girl." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 5.) The Attawapiskat Cree were also not afraid of the dwarf people who inhabited the rocky cliffs along rivers. Honigmann, *Attawapiskat Cree field notes* (1947–48).

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773 539 having come a long way." The shaman turned back and flew over the camp. He told the people, "The animal is coming close to the camp. I can't stop it. You boys better move." All the people fled, traveling about 20 miles over the mountains. When they grew tired they made camp. The shaman caught up with them and said, "I've fixed him. When daylight comes you'll hear the animal. He'll go back where he came from."

With daylight they heard a howling and saw two bars of light in the mountains. All the people became afraid. The shaman went out to meet the animal, who said, "You're going to make a trip with me." The shaman advised the people that he would stay with the animal ten days. Then he disappeared. In ten days he returned reeking so strongly that the people could smell him a mile off. He explained that when he had reached the monster the latter had swallowed him. "I went all through the guts and came out the other end. That's why I smell so strong." He then directed the people to smoke him in a fire of rotten wood. The shaman circled the fire singing.

773 Several culture heros were assumed to have existed at an earlier time. Kli?atata ("filling snowshoe father") invented the bow, the snowshoe, and taught the people to make fish nets from willow-bark line. The informant ranked him "pretty near as good as Tsuguya," suggesting in addition that Kli?atata might have been the latter's son. Tsuguya's adventures with the devil made good narrative material.

773 539 776 Tsuguya was a smart man who could make anything. One day he went down [up?] a long river. He heard a dog barking and saw a camp at the bottom of a hill. Here there was a woman who looked like a dog. Everybody who came by and saw this dog thought that its owner must be living there and so decided to visit. The dog was ɔya, a devil's girl. When Tsuguya got out of the canoe he fell and the woman took an ax and struck him. She skinned him and put him in the pot. After boiling the contents a long time she uncovered the vessel but found Tsuguya still alive. Then she fried [broiled?] him. Finally she realized that this man could not be killed.

Tsuguya went hunting. He met a bear who also had a girl. This woman, too, was a helper of the devil. The girl said that there was a bear across the lake. She hoped to trap the man. Tsuguya went over and killed the bear. The devil now chased Tsuguya, who went into a hole and turned into a beaver. The devil told his girl to set a net. They set the net but when they hauled it in found that it had caught nothing. The beaver just kept swimming around. The devil now drank all the water in that place. The smart man went into the mud and caused the water to reappear again (X).

773 776 Many other adventures and narrow escapes befell Tsuguya. In one of these he outwitted the anthropomorphic moon plus the latter's animal helpers in order to win the moon's daughter for a wife. The moon is also identified with the devil (O). Tsuguya appears to be the Athapaskan counterpart of the Algonkian Gluskabe and Tcikapis. The remaining Kaska culture hero, Gatco ("big rabbit"), bore no relationship to Tsuguya. Although nothing was learned of his activities it is not improbable that he is cognatic to Nanabozho, identified by Ojibwa and Menomini as the Great Hare.[7]

773 *Dease River Kaska.* Contemporary informants speak readily of the Supreme Being who "made everything." Another version of creation has been recorded in this area by Teit.[8]

[7] Fisher, *The Mythology of the Northern and Northeastern Algonkians in Reference to Algonkian Mythology as a Whole* (1946), 230.

[8] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 441–442. Speaking of Tahltan cosmogony the same writer says: "Some of the Tahltan beliefs are very interesting. The earth is thought to be circular, and to be surrounded by salt water lakes. The sky is dome-shaped, and hangs over the earth like an umbrella, the edges touching the waters all around. The sky revolves sunwise, while the earth is considered stationary. At

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Origin of the Earth

Once there was no earth. Water was where the earth is now. The world was a great lake. The animals and birds wanted to have an earth, and proposed to dive for it. The earth was very deep under the water. Beaver and Muskrat, and all the animals and birds, dived, but none of them reached the bottom. None of them stayed under water longer than half a day. At last Diver (a bird) went down. After six days he came up quite exhausted and speechless. His friends examined his toenails, and found mud or earth under them. From this they formed on top of the water a new earth, which grew until it formed the present earth. At first it was merely mud and very soft. Later it became firm, and trees and vegetation began to grow on it. Now the earth is old and dry. Perhaps it is drying up. 773

Perhaps there came a second flood. At any rate Teit collected a tradition of a great inundation.[9]

The Great Flood

Once there came a great flood which covered the earth. Most of the people made rafts, and some escaped in canoes. Great darkness came on, and high winds which drove the vessels hither and thither. The people became separated. Some were driven far away. When the flood subsided, people landed wherever they found the nearest land. When the earth became dry, they lived in the places near where they had landed. People were now widely scattered over the world. They did not know where other people lived, and probably thought themselves the only survivors. Long afterwards, when in their wanderings they met people from another place, they spoke different languages, and could not understand one another. *This is why there are now many different centres of population, many tribes, and many languages.* Before the flood, there was but one centre; for all the people lived together in one country, and spoke one language.

Looking beyond the everyday world of the senses the Indians postulated a variety of entities or beings. The cannibalistic Big Man (Tenatco), who used no dwelling but sometimes dug a hole in the ground, inspired fear because of his predilection for stealing adults and children. Bald Man constituted a beneficent giant, who subsisted on fish and always walked stooped until one day by straightening up he raised the sky. Bald Man continues to live on earth but is never seen. The Little Men, Klunetene, who lived on 776

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the edges of the earth the weather is always chilly. Some think that above or beyond the sky there is another earth, which is inhabited by birds. Possibly the sky is the floor of this other world. There is also a belief that the sky is animated and the same as the mother of the people, while the sun is masculine and the same as the father. The sun was formerly prayed to, and traces of sun worship abound. The earth we tread is like a crust, or skin, or blanket, which is held up by the earth-mother, who is like a post that supports it. When she gets tired, she moves her position, which causes an earthquake. She is becoming older and weaker all the time, therefore the earth is not so high as formerly, and is sagging down into the waters. Some day she will be unable to hold it up any longer. She will fall like a rotten post, and the earth will drop down and be submerged. There is also a belief in the meat-mother, who gave birth to all the animals and still controls them. The moon and stars are transformed beings. Wind is the breath of people, viz., a cold people who live in the far north, and a warm people who live in the south. When they speak, cold and warm winds blow over the earth. Thunder is a bird, and the noise of thunder is caused by the flapping of its wings. Its armpits are red, and when these are exposed by the extending of its wings, the red is seen as lightning." (Teit, *On Taltan (Athabaskan) Work* [1912], 485-486.) Our upper Liard River informant (O) reported that Tahltan believed in the Nadanhe (also, Nadani), who were large patched moccasins and sometimes caused people to faint upon his sudden appearance. To pacify him people left large moccasins in the bush but they were never taken.

[9] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 443-443.

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776 mice which they secured with small bows and arrows in the tall grass, sometimes be-
[177] friended men. They also enjoyed a reputation for their fun making. Information about Fire Man (Kondíklute or Kotc) came to the Kaska from the Taku Indians, who called him Tciskil'e. An evil being, he spoke in the fire's cracking and to him the people then threw small bits of meat. The devil sent cold and controlled other evil beings like Tenatco. Long ago Tryutsila, a cannibal, prowled the earth for unsuspecting victims whom he clubbed to death and then prepared like game for eating. The track of this being struck great terror when encountered but he perished long ago in the flood. Water beings were unknown. Thunder originated from a great "fly" (bird? insect?) with a large mouth.[11]

776 *Tsalona.* No idea of a Supreme Being obtained in aboriginal times. Something called a devil (Liiap) entered into the aboriginal belief system but details could not be recalled.

SHAMANISM

756 *Upper Liard Kaska.* An informant told us that a shaman was always a fat person because he constantly dreamed that he was eating. Such a characterization may be derived from one or two renowned shamans about whom the informant had knowledge. Every young man received the opportunity to acquire power that would enhance his personal capacities. Hence every man was a potential shaman (meta or nudita; the latter word appears to designate the curing status of the person). Women too could be visited by extraordinary dreams through which they, like men, acquired shamanistic
[789] power. By working harder at shamanism some men and a few women acquired a wide reputation as curers, prophets, and conjurers.

756 The power to perform shamanistic functions came from "dreaming of animals in a
787 lonely place" (O). A young person would spend time in the bush. At night he might hear ɔɣa singing like a human being or he might hear a moose or bear singing. "You go in bush. Pretty soon get dark. You hear somebody sing. Bye and bye get light. Fellow goes and just moose there when you wake up. Bye and bye get dark and that man come back" (X). When a boy reached about 14 or 15 years in age his father directed him to sleep in the forest. Before leaving camp the youth would sometimes suck his mother's breast "just like a little baby." Generally the aspirant traveled about ten miles from his parents' camp, stopping at a place where he saw porcupine tracks. Arriving at such a site the boy painted his chest with a pigment made from rotten wood. Always he camped alone, accompanying his one or two days of isolation with sparse eating and little drinking.[11] It was forbidden to take a bow and arrows along on a vision quest. Every night

[11] Thunder birds have been reported for the Tahltan (see footnote 8) and Tlingit. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 435; Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of Alaska* (1914), 186.

[11] Among the Tlingit would-be shamans "spent long periods in the forest in absolute solitude, supposedly in communication with evil spirits. They also had periods of fasting and their diet differed in many respects from that of others." (Jones, *Study of the Thlingets of* Alaska [1914], 155–156.) Drucker is more explicit in listing the following traits for the Tlingit power quest: shaman's power from animal spirits; bathing and "medicines" used preparatory to novice's vision quest; fasting and continence enjoined during the quest; bathing and fasting after first encounter as well as a four-day period of singing

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A widower also had to remain single for a time. No visits took place to the burial ground. People avoided that area because of their fear of ghosts. 78

Beigahee remained conspicuously absent, objects being neither burned nor buried with a corpse. After the body had been disposed of the deceased's clothing, to which the ghost might be attached sentimentally, together with the dwelling in which death had occurred, were burned. Informants said that the destruction of the house helped to get rid of the illness lurking there. We are not certain in our mind if this statement represents an awareness of contagion, nor if the explanation has been derived from European sources. Certain objects of the deceased,like knives, unworn clothing, arrows, snowshoes, and tanning tools were distributed as mementoes by a surviving brother. Close relatives shared in these goods. Food left by the deceased went to the opposite moiety, probably in the death feast.[46] It is by no means clear whether a dead person's name was regularly inherited at a memorial potlatch. Sometimes, at any rate such names did come to be assumed by the oldest surviving, like-sexed sibling (real or classificatory) or by a deceased's brother's son or sister's daughter. These heirs directed the potlatch which, coming about a year after death, terminated the period of mourning.

Dease River Kaska. Old men possessed enhanced supernatural power, their longevity being a result of "good living." Such a belief perhaps compensated them for the disabilities brought about by age. An informant claimed that the aged were never abandoned but provided with walking sticks that helped them keep up with travelers. When incapable of walking the old were carried on the backs of strong, young relatives and drawn on toboggans. Sometimes people delegated a young relative to fish and otherwise care for an oldster until the group returned with some meat. 888

The origin of death is given in a tale recorded by Teit as constituting Bear's revenge for the theft of fire. Had it not been for Bear's interference constant renewal of life would have been the rule.[47] Death denoted the complete separation of wind (tuntaj'uc) and body. The wind continued to exist in one of two afterworlds. The souls of good people went to "heaven" and "God" while the evil found punishment in the company of the devil. The informant volunteered little concerning life after death. Prompting elicited admission of a path leading to a large body of water that had to be crossed in a boat. Crow might have operated the ferry. Only good people enjoyed reincarnation, the wind returning to life in an infant of opposite sex.[48] The appearance of a ghost (tsunetsina) provided a frightening experience. 761 776 775

[46] Among the Pelly River people "the dead person's goods, if he has any, is packed up by the head of the family. That . . . of any value are cached, the rest is either thrown into the river or burned after a year or two. The valuable stuff is then divided amongst the relatives of the dead person . . . it would be given to the ravens if the dead person happened to be a wolf or vice versa." (Field, *Unpublished manuscript* [1913], 13.) The Tlingit destroyed food and property with the aim of sending it on to the deceased "who then actually received its spiritual counterpart." Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 431; see also 429-430.

[47] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 443-444.

[48] Among the Tahltan "there is a strong belief in the rebirth of souls. A deceased relative is often born again by a mother, aunt, sister, or other relative. . . . The dead go to three different places: a